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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
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EXAMINER

BUTLER, MICHAEL E

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3653

DATE MAILED: 09/27/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/678,182

Applicant(s)

BAACK ET AL.

Examiner

Michael Butler

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 June 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 19-23 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) 1,2,8-11,17 and 18 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) 3-7 and 12-16 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 10/06/03
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Priority

1. Applicant's claim of priority to application 60/415745 filed 10/4/02 is made is acknowledged.

Election/Restriction

2. Applicant's election of invention I without traverse on 6/16/2006 of the restriction requirement of 5/15/2006 is acknowledged and made final.
3. Claims 19-23 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claim(s) 1-2, 10-11 is/are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pollock et al. 6202888 in view of Hieb '776 (7032776) wherein the former discloses the elements previously discussed and further discloses:

(Re: cl 1,10) A vending machine comprising: a cabinet frame including top, bottom, side and rear walls that collectively define a central cavity (c4 L 1-15); a door mounted to the cabinet frame for selectively closing the central cavity;

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a plurality of dispensing units, each of the plurality of dispensing units being adapted to receive product containers from an associated one of the plurality of stack areas (c4 L 25-44);

(Re: cl 1) a plurality of vend motors connected to the plurality of dispensing unit, each of the plurality of vend motors including a rotatable output for selectively operating a respective one of the dispensing units to dispense the product containers (c5 L 20-66);

and an electronic control unit adapted to control rotation of the output of each of the plurality of vend motors through a desired vend angle, with the desired vend angle being established based on the product container to be dispensed, electronic control unit including a memory having stored therein various predetermined vend angles corresponding to known product containers, while being programmable to retain supplementary vend angles for additional product containers (c6 L 36-c7L5; c11L 25-35)

(Re: cl 10) means for shifting the plurality of dispensing units through desired vend angles for dispensing of product containers from the plurality of stack areas (c5 L 20-66);

and means for controlling the shifting means, said controlling means including a memory having stored therein various predetermined vend angles corresponding to known product containers, while being programmable to retain supplementary vend angles for additional product containers (c6 L 36-c7L5)

(Re: cl 2,11) wherein the desired vend angle for each of the plurality of vend motors can be individually set (C11 L 25-35).

The latter discloses any elements not inherently taught by the former including:

(Re: cl 1,10) a plurality of column walls defining a plurality of stack areas for storing columns of product containers to be vended (c6 L 36-c7L5; c11L 25-35).

It would have been obvious to take the teachings of Pollock on a columnar stack vending machine to control dispensing of cylindrical dispensate of varying selected diameter as taught by Heib '776 and come up with the instant invention.

6. Claim(s) 1-2, 10-11 is/are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pollock et al. 6202888 in view of Heib '427 (6945427) wherein the former discloses the elements previously discussed and further discloses:

(Re: cl 1,10) A vending machine comprising: a cabinet frame including top, bottom, side and rear walls that collectively define a central cavity (c4 L 1-15); a door mounted to the cabinet frame for selectively closing the central cavity;

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a plurality of dispensing units, each of the plurality of dispensing units being adapted to receive product containers from an associated one of the plurality of stack areas (c4 L 25-44);

(Re: cl 1) a plurality of vend motors connected to the plurality of dispensing unit, each of the plurality of vend motors including a rotatable output for selectively operating a respective one of the dispensing units to dispense the product containers (c5 L 20-66);

and an electronic control unit adapted to control rotation of the output of each of the plurality of vend motors through a desired vend angle, with the desired vend angle being established based on the product container to be dispensed, electronic control unit including a memory having stored therein various predetermined vend angles corresponding to known product containers, while being programmable to retain supplementary vend angles for additional product containers (c6 L 36-c7L5; c11L 25-35)

(Re: cl 10) means for shifting the plurality of dispensing units through desired vend angles for dispensing of product containers from the plurality of stack areas (c5 L 20-66);

and means for controlling the shifting means, said controlling means including a memory having stored therein various predetermined vend angles corresponding to known product containers, while being programmable to retain supplementary vend angles for additional product containers (c6 L 36-c7L5)

(Re: cl 2,11) wherein the desired vend angle for each of the plurality of vend motors can be individually set (C11 L 25-35).

The latter discloses any elements not inherently taught by the former including:

(Re: cl 1,10) a plurality of column walls defining a plurality of stack areas for storing columns of product containers to be vended (¶26) (c4 L 5-26);

(Re: cl 8,17) wherein the electronic control unit is operable in various routines, including test, set selection depth and set package type routines (¶10, 11, 32)

(Re: cl 9,18) (8) wherein the test routine includes column vend, jog and selection switch tests (C2 L 4-15 ; c3 L 1-21; c3 L 44-c4 L 4)

It would have been obvious to take the teachings of Pollock on a columnar stack vending machine to control dispensing of cylindrical dispensate of varying selected diameter as taught by Heib '427 and come up with the instant invention. It would have been obvious to take the teachings of Pollock operate the machine in a mode to test, set selection depth and set package type to adjust the machine for accommodation of varying dispensate as taught by Heib '427 and come up with the instant invention. It would have

been obvious for Pollock operate routines to test vend, selection switches and jog to verify the reprogrammed machine is vending properly as taught by Heib '427 and come up with the instant invention.

7. Claim(s) 1-2 and 10-11 is/are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki 65612003 in view of Pollock et al. 6202888 wherein the former discloses:

(Re: cl 1,10) A vending machine comprising: a cabinet frame including top, bottom, side and rear walls that collectively define a central cavity (2 fig 1; c5 L 58-63);
a plurality of column walls defining a plurality of stack areas for storing columns of product containers to be vended (14 fig 2; c7 L 1-16);
a door mounted to the cabinet frame for selectively closing the central cavity (c5 L 58-63);
a plurality of dispensing units, each of the plurality of dispensing units being adapted to receive product containers from an associated one of the plurality of stack areas (c8 L15-65);
(Re: cl 1) a plurality of vend motors connected to the plurality of dispensing unit, each of the plurality of vend motors including a rotatable output for selectively operating a respective one of the dispensing units to dispense the product containers (c9 L 1-18)
(Re: cl 2,11) wherein the desired vend angle for each of the plurality of vend motors can be individually set (c9 L 35-67).

The latter discloses any elements not inherently taught by the former including:

and an electronic control unit adapted to control rotation of the output of each of the plurality of vend motors through a desired vend angle, with the desired vend angle being established based on the product container to be dispensed, electronic control unit including a memory having stored therein various predetermined vend angles corresponding to known product containers, while being programmable to retain supplementary vend angles for additional product containers (c6 L 36-c7L5; c11L 25-35).

It would have been obvious for Suzuki to substitute the rotary disc programmable angle selections with an electronic controller because an electronic control makes

reprogramming easier and faster than opening a machine up to adjust control discs as taught by Pollock and come up with the instant invention.

8. Claim(s) 1-2, 10-11 is/are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pollock et al. 6202888 in view of Feltrin '823 (5799823) wherein the former discloses the elements previously discussed and the latter discloses any elements not inherently taught by the former including:

(Re: cl 1,10) a plurality of column walls defining a plurality of stack areas for storing columns of product containers to be vended (c3 L 1-11)

It would have been obvious to take the teachings of Pollock on a columnar stack vending machine to control dispensing of cylindrical dispensate of varying selected diameter as taught by Feltrin and come up with the instant invention.

Allowable Subject Matter

9. Claims 3-7 and 12-16 are objected to as being dependent claims premised upon a rejected base claim but would be allowed if the re-written in independent form or if the limitations of an allowable claim were incorporated within the independent base claim from which this claims depend or if re-written premised upon dependence from an otherwise allowable base claim.

Conclusion

10. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.


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11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Exmr. Michael E. Butler whose telephone number is (571) 272-6937.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick Mackey, can be reached on (571) 272-6916. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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9/16/06


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